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PRINCIPLES ON GENERAL RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS

Earth Charter

Proposal submitted by Canada

We, the people of the Earth,

Being the first generation of humankind to have seen our planet from outer space and to have perceived its beauty and fragility in its entirety,

Realizing that the ecological health of the Earth is now in jeopardy, putting at risk the chances of development of all its people, while so many have not even reached a decent standard of living,

Understanding that our common future is based on the fundamental inseparability of humankind from all of nature,

Affirming that, in order to be sustainable, our development requires that we integrate both the environmental and the developmental concerns that prevail at local, regional and global levels,

Aware that the protection of the environment and the achievement of development requires the enhancement of international peace and security, as well as full cooperation among ourselves, both individually and collectively,

Hereby solemnly declare that:

1. All States and people share the responsibility, which is common but differentiated, to conserve, protect and restore the health and integrity of the Earth's ecosystem, including its air, land, water and biological diversity.

2. All States and people shall, for the benefit of future as well as present generations, have the opportunity to achieve full development and equity, while living within the capacities of the Earth's ecosystem.

3. All States and people shall strive for the elimination of poverty as an indispensable component of sustainable development.

4. All States and people shall treat the environment of other States and people, the global commons, as well as the Earth's ecosystem, in a manner at least as favourable as their own environment and consistent with international law and this Charter.

5. All States and people shall recognize and encourage cultural diversity, particularly indigenous lifestyles with a sustainable relationship to the Earth.

6. All States and people, when undertaking activities that may affect the Earth, shall adopt precautionary and preventive approaches, including assessment and management practices which take into account the intrinsic value of the environment.

7. All States and people, when using the Earth's resources, shall adopt the most appropriate environmental technology in order to minimize waste and harm to the environment.

8. All States and people shall strive to ensure that economic activities reflect their full environmental and social costs and benefits.

9. All States and people shall cooperate to promote trade relations that are supportive of local, regional and global sustainable development.

10. All States and people shall promote public education, scientific research and monitoring, and the availability of information concerning the Earth's ecosystem and development, and the relationship between them.

11. All States and people shall ensure public participation in the decision-making processes concerning the environment and development.

12. All States and people shall pursue and encourage the implementation of the principles of this Charter, in cooperation and in accordance with their respective responsibilities and capabilities.